

Schaumburg, IL - To promote the best use of federal tax dollars and help local officials fully access federal programs, Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) welcomed local school officials from across the 8th Congressional District to a Q&A session with federal and state officials on education funding in the recently passed American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (H.R. 1).

Julie Ewart, Public Affairs Specialist from the U.S. Department of Education, and Darren Reisberg, General Counsel to the Illinois State Board of Education, gave brief presentations and answered questions from nearly 50 officials from 23 local school districts. The purpose of the event, held yesterday at the Congresswoman's Schaumburg office, was to answer local officials' technical questions about education funding in the ARRA, so that they could incorporate the information into their budgets for the 2009-2010 school year.

"Congress acted quickly and boldly in passing a Recovery Act that sends dollars back home to invest in our communities," Bean said. "This forum represents part of my ongoing efforts to educate our schools and communities about the resources available to them in the Recovery Act. I appreciate the Department of Education and the Illinois State Board of Education joining us in this effort."

"The overall goals of education funding under ARRA are to stimulate the economy in the short term and invest wisely for the long-term health of our nation," Ewart said. "To meet the long-term goal, these funds should be used to improve schools, raise achievement, drive reforms and produce better results for children and young people."

"The federal stimulus package is a great opportunity for schools, providing additional money at a critical time when the state owes Illinois schools more than \$1 billion," said Christopher A. Koch, State Superintendent of Education. "However, with that opportunity comes additional responsibilities and a number of unanswered questions. We're working with local schools and the federal government to get as many answers as possible so that we can provide the public with transparency and accountability."

Bean has held several meetings with local officials and community leaders to review the Recovery Act and answer questions about the funding available for infrastructure, education, green energy and small business. She has distributed a 58-page guide to the act to all local governments and business associations. Complete information on the Recovery Act, including

the guide, is available on the Congresswoman's website at www.house.gov/bean/stimulus .